

Action 9: Purchase of Conservation Easements on Key Private Lands

Protect wildlife corridor function, prevent expansions of fire risk management activities, limit increases to the number of people, residences, or other structures which could be at risk during a future fire, limit increases in potential ignition sources in new areas of the wildlands.

Cautions:

Some property owners may not want to sell.

Description:

Public agency(s) or land trust(s) could purchase conservation easements on key private lands in critical portions of the Corridor from willing sellers. Specific terms of conservation easements vary, but generally enable private land owners to retain ownership and some land uses while receiving compensation for relinquishing development rights. Tax breaks for relinquishing development rights, to be distinguished from the lower property tax assessment which would likely occur following the sale of an easement, are another alternative. Lands which have significant private value for uses other than development are best suited for this action.

Implementation:

Agencies/organizations suitable for implementing this action include EBRPD, EBMUD, Contra Costa County, the City of Oakland, the California Department of Fish and Game, and private land trusts. Land owners could also be compensated via a one-time payment or with tax incentives. Many of the grants and funding sources identified in Action 2 are also available to support this action.

Fiscal Impacts:

Costs to purchase conservation easements typically range from 25% to 75% of the full (fee title) value of the land in California. Conservation easement costs in the Caldecott area might range from \$5000 to \$200,000/acre. Depending upon the parcel in question, annual easement management costs could range up to \$300 per acre.

Anticipated results: